



# Cycle Strategy

May 2016

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# PTSE Lead Member Foreword

Cycling is on the increase in South Gloucestershire, and we are rightly proud of the improvements to our cycle network that have been achieved in recent years, but there are still challenges to be met in order to achieve our Vision of enabling people of all ages and abilities to cycle in comfort. This strategy sets out our aims, objectives and targets to deliver this Vision, by developing and improving the network, supporting active travel and developing liveable places. The Health and Economic benefits of greater participation in cycling are significant, and by focusing on creating better places and making cycling simpler, safer and more attractive, we will aim encourage people from all across South Gloucestershire to make cycling a part of their regular routine.



Cllr Hunt, PTSE Lead  
Member

# 1. Introduction, vision and targets

## Vision for cycling in South Gloucestershire

**People of all ages and abilities should be able to cycle in comfort in South Gloucestershire.**

South Gloucestershire Council is proud of what it has achieved for cyclists in recent years; significant improvements have been made to the strategic cycle network, increased numbers of people have received Bikeability training, and public satisfaction with our Walking and Cycling provision is amongst the highest in the Country. The aim of this document is to build on those achievements, ensuring future investment in cycling is focused on achieving our aims and objectives.

Cycling is a cheap, healthy and pollution free way for people to get around and we will aim to make cycling an easy option for people to use for local journeys. We will do this by making the local transport network as safe and convenient for cycling as possible through our investment in improved cycling infrastructure and high quality maintenance.

Our cycling aims are to:

- make cycling simpler;
- make cycling safer;
- make cycling more attractive; and
- make better places.

### Benefits of cycling

#### **For Cyclists:**

- Cheap – no fuel required! A year's bike maintenance costs a lot less than other forms of transport.
- Healthy – cycling can help improve your fitness and reduce the risk of heart disease and obesity.
- Reliable journey times – bicycles don't get stuck in traffic congestion meaning that cycling journey times are more consistent and can be a quicker option for local journeys than the car.

#### **For Employers:**

- Productivity – getting more people cycling to work will create a healthier and more alert workforce resulting in lower absence rates due to sickness.
- Efficient use of space – 8 bicycles can be parked in the space of one car.

#### **For Wider Society:**

- Less congestion – replacing car journeys with cycling means fewer cars on the road.
- Less pollution – fewer cars on the road means cleaner air.

## Objectives

In order to help us successfully meet our 4 Cycling Aims we have developed the following objectives:



- To get more people cycling, more safely, more often
- To provide safe and accessible cycling for users of all ages and abilities
- To maintain, improve and expand our cycle network
- To make cycling the fastest way to get from A-B for most short journeys
- To ensure cycling links well with other sustainable transport modes to encourage long multimodal journeys.
- To provide a comprehensive network of cycle routes across the authority, linking key housing, employment and leisure sites.
- To effectively promote our cycle routes in schools, businesses and communities, as well as online.

This Cycle Strategy will address gaps in the existing cycle network to help improve connections for cyclists. Evidence from local residents and businesses has shown us that there is great potential for cycling to grow as a means of travel. This document will create a plan for how cycling projects will be implemented, and how cycling behaviour programmes will be delivered. Its success will be measured against the following targets:

## Targets

- Cycling will account for 20% of commuter trips by 2026
- 30% reduction in all Cyclist casualties by 2020
- To continue and increase current levels of Bikeability training within schools
- To maintain or improve current high levels of public satisfaction with Walking and Cycling<sup>1</sup>

## Bikeability

Teaching children to ride safely and confidently is a crucial factor in encouraging cycling as a lifestyle choice. From 2011 to 2015 the number of people Bikeability trained has increased by 36% in South Gloucestershire. In 2014-15 more than 2,800 people received Bikeability training at Levels 1-3. The Council are actively delivering Bikeability in 71 out of 83 primary schools and 9 out of 16 secondary schools.

The Council have recently piloted Bikeability Recycle and this has meant that 56 bikes have been given to children who would not previously have had access to bikes and will now be able to access Bikeability training.

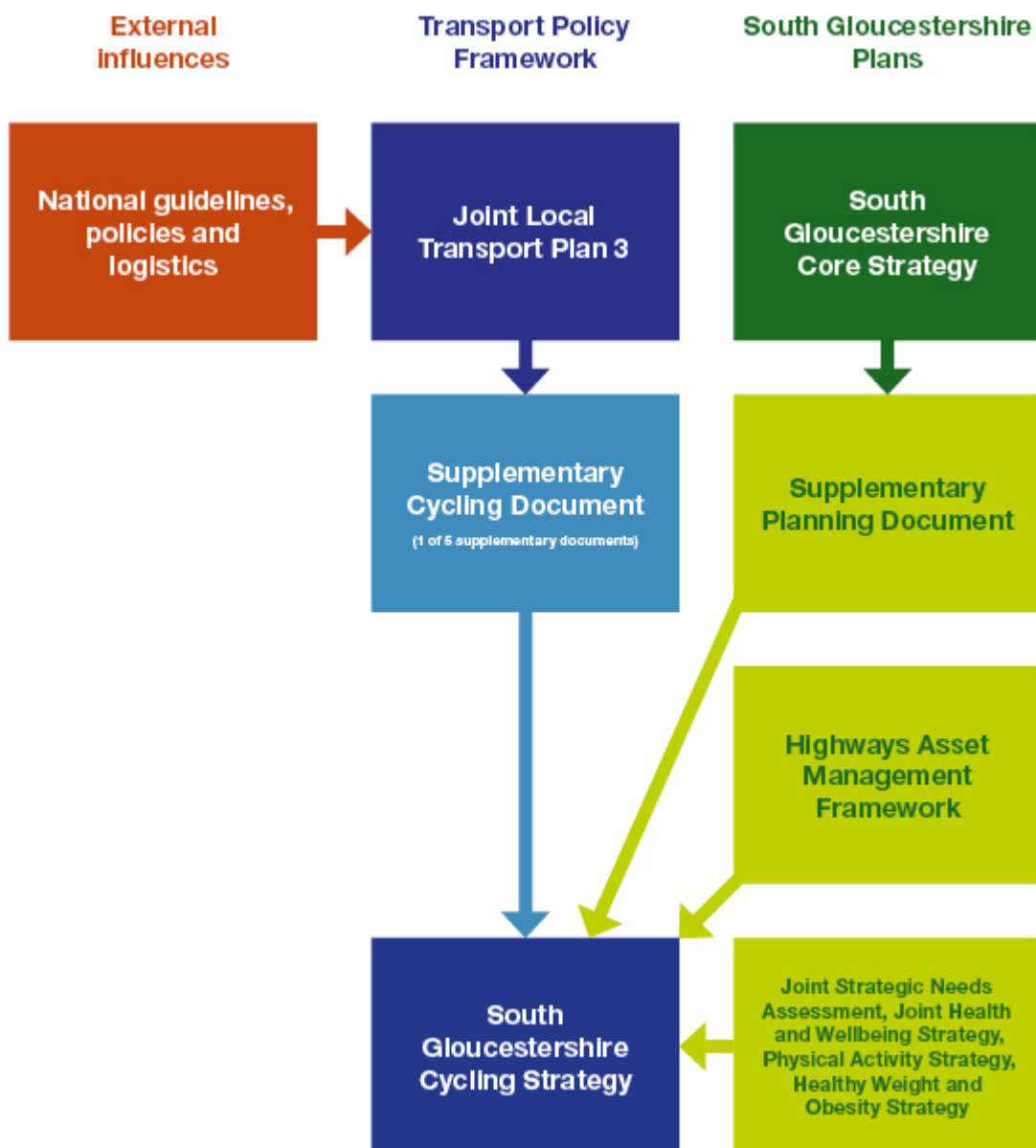
### **Trainees taking part in Bikeability Recycle as part of the Bikeability Plus pilot:**



<sup>1</sup> – 2015 NHT Public satisfaction survey rated South Gloucestershire 61% satisfaction overall for Walking and Cycling, best in the South West and Second Best Nationally.

## 2. Overall strategy context

Currently there are a number of policy documents that contain information about, or are relevant to, our approach to cycling in South Gloucestershire as show in the figure below:



The role of this document is to set out what South Gloucestershire Council aims to achieve in cycling, bringing together best practice policy and guidance and applying it at a local level .The Council is committed to the aims and targets identified within this document, but, as the diagram above demonstrates, cycling is one of a number of important modes of sustainable transport, that together will contribute to achieving the overarching goals set out within the West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3). It will therefore be necessary to balance cycling priorities against competing demands from different modes.

Joint Local Transport Plan 3 Goals:

- reduce carbon emissions;

- support economic growth;
- promote accessibility;
- contribute to better safety, security and health;
- improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

## National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 29-41 of the NPPF establish the requirements for promoting sustainable transport by local authorities and within new developments. Our Cycling Strategy meets these requirements:

- Promotes sustainable development
- Contributes to wider sustainability and health objectives
- Helps to give people a real choice about how they travel
- Supports the reduction in greenhouse gases and reduce traffic congestion
- Works with neighbouring authorities to provide strong cycling links
- Ensures the promotion of cycling facilities within new development that tie in with the existing and planned cycle network.
- Seeks to maximise the potential uptake in sustainable transport especially cycling
- Promotes safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists, avoids street clutter and where appropriate encourages home zones and other innovative measures

## Opportunities and Challenges for South Gloucestershire

- A number of large scale new neighbourhood developments are planned across South Gloucestershire in the next 10-15 years, providing a significant opportunity to work with developers in order to deliver a well-connected cycle network that provides for the needs of both residents of the new neighbourhoods, and for commuter and leisure cyclists passing through them.
- The large South Gloucestershire-Bristol urban area means long commuter journeys are common. It is important that our cycle routes allow people to travel efficiently from A-B and integrate well with public transport.
- The dominance of the car is a major challenge facing South Gloucestershire which can experience severe traffic congestion at peak times. By providing better cycling routes we aim to provide a realistic alternative to the private car.
- South Gloucestershire is made up of a large proportion of rural areas, which for many people means relying on their car for transportation. We recognise that we cannot provide a cycle path along every country road, however, we aim to encourage cycling as a realistic option in rural areas.

## Current Position

We believe that cycling can be built into everyone's daily routine, and by making a commute to work or trip to the shops into a physical activity, South Gloucestershire will become a healthier place. Physical activity is an effective means of helping to prevent the development of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, obesity, dementia and other mental health conditions. Supporting people to become a bit more active is where the biggest health gains can be made.

Giving people the opportunity to cycle, will help them gain many of the benefits that being active can bring, whatever their age or ability.



This Cycling Strategy document will be the first point of reference for “all things” cycling in South Gloucestershire. The Strategy brings together all of the Council’s existing cycle related policies into one place and makes clear what standards are expected for new cycling schemes and infrastructure.

South Gloucestershire comprises a mixture of urban areas, market towns and rural countryside and villages. One of the Council’s key objectives is to help create sustainable communities that will stand the test of time, where people will want to live and work. Cycling is a big part of this.

South Gloucestershire has close links with the greater West of England area, particularly in terms of transport with neighbouring Bristol City. Over reliance on the car is resulting in traffic congestion and poor air quality, and making our streets less attractive places to be.

South Gloucestershire Travel to Work Survey 2015 has shown that a large proportion of commuters are considering a change to cycling in the next six months. There is a real opportunity to boost cycling numbers, improve the impact on communities through reduced congestion and air pollution and creating a healthier population.

From those surveyed who are considering a change:

- 58% of 795 solo car drivers considering a change to cycling in the next six months
- 46% of 167 car sharers were thinking of taking up cycling
- 73% of 26 motorcyclists or scooter users were thinking of taking up cycling
- 50% of 83 pedestrians were thinking of switching to cycling

According to 2011 census data, in South Gloucestershire cycling accounts for 3.9% of journeys to work. This is above the National average of 2.8%, providing an encouraging base upon which to build, and offering even greater potential to increase the proportion of journeys made by bike. 57% of car trips in the West of England region are under 5 miles and therefore have the potential to be cycled.



## Hambrook junction

An innovative Cycling City Ambition Fund scheme has provided a straight through' North-South crossing of the A4174 Ring Road for cycle traffic. The crossing which connects Bristol Road to the well-used Ring Road Cycle Path, part of the Cycle Trunk route, is separate from the adjacent provision for pedestrians and allows cycle traffic to cross the Ring Road in a single phase, thereby reducing delays for cyclists. The new layout significantly improves a difficult crossing which had been highlighted by users as a constraint to increasing use of this route, providing an important link to the employment areas and educational establishments around the ring road, for the local communities at Hambrook and Winterbourne.

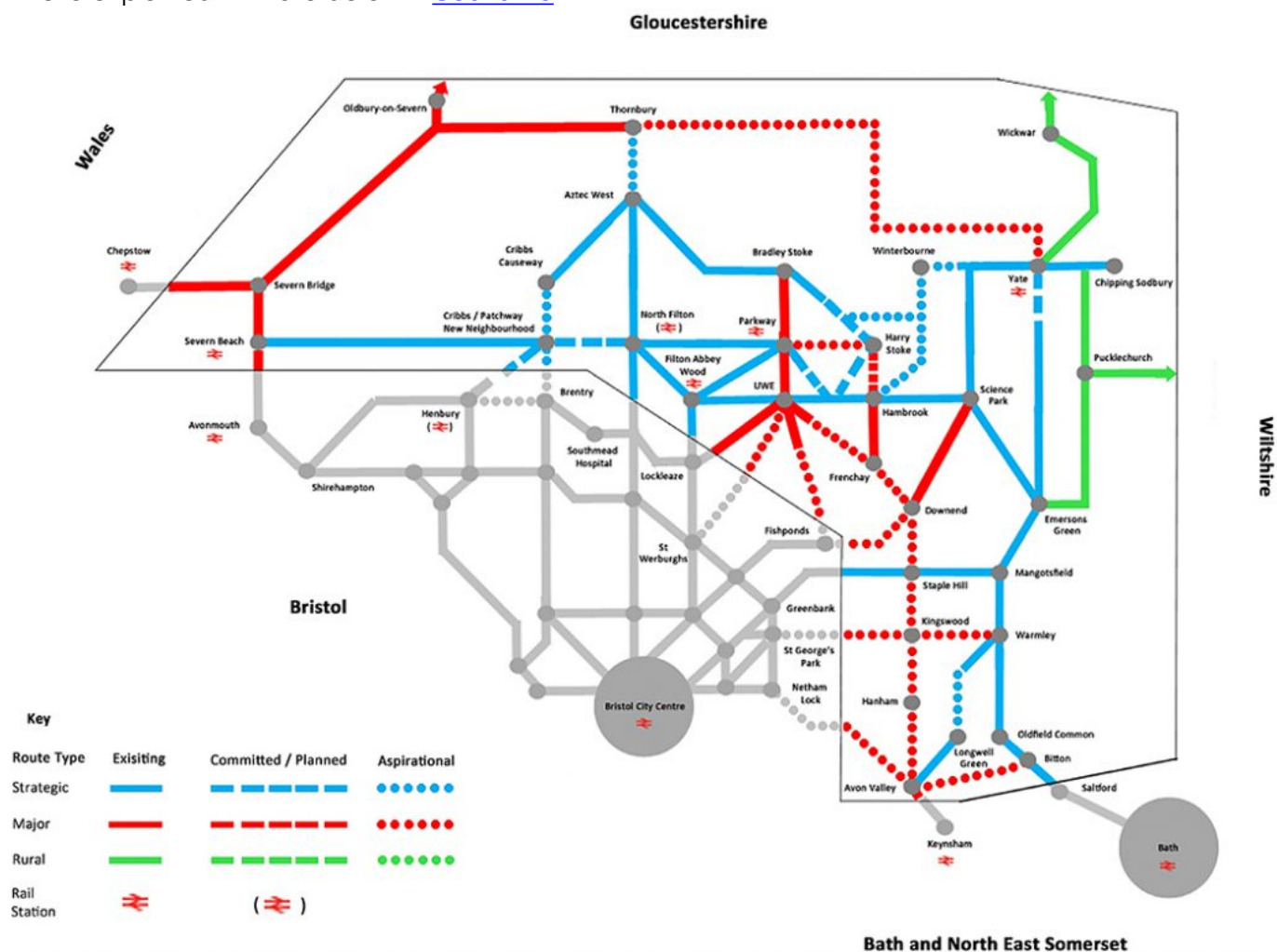
### **New layout at Hambrook:**



### 3. Developing better places through cycling

#### South Gloucestershire Cycle Network

This diagram illustrates the comprehensive network of key cycle routes we are aiming to achieve. It shows how our current and identified future cycle routes link with the cycle routes of our West of England neighbours, as well as highlighting each routes current status within the route hierarchy - this is explained in more detail in [Section 6](#).



#### Links to strategic development sites

South Gloucestershire is an attractive place in which to live and locate a business and this has resulted in significant levels of residential and commercial development over the past few decades. The Core Strategy identifies a continuing need for growth, with around 26,000 new homes and major employment sites at the Enterprise Areas at Emerson's Green, Filton and Severnside planned over the next decade. The West of England Local Enterprise Partnership estimate that 95,000 new jobs will be created in South Gloucestershire by 2030.

This new development will take place mainly in the north fringe of Bristol, and around the market towns of Yate and Thornbury. Therefore our cycle network must grow to support this development, by providing sustainable routes from people's homes to the places that they work,

shop and socialise, as well as ensuring direct, efficient routes across new developments to improve journeys starting and finishing beyond development boundaries. Provision for cycling will be embedded within all new development from the outset. We also recognise the importance of providing key linkages with Bristol and these linkages will be improved and increased where possible.

## Supporting Active Travel first

Walking and cycling as a mode of travel also have positive health impacts and can be incorporated into people's daily routines. This is essentially what Active Travel means - being active while you travel. Everybody knows that being active is good for your health, so we want to make this as convenient as possible. In order to do this, we will aim to make sure that cycling (along with walking) is the easiest way to make short journeys, be it to school, to work, the local shops or for leisure.

## Developing the Active Travel Network

Our Active Travel Network will continue to grow as development takes place. New developments, such as the Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood, will add to this network as they grow, helping to make stronger connections to existing neighbourhoods and transport interchanges, and connect with the key routes identified by Bristol City Council's Cycle Strategy.

## Developing Liveable Places

Streets are the arteries of our communities, the one public place the majority of people use daily. But streets are more than just a way of getting from A-B, they are a place for community, social interaction and they affect our quality of life for better or worse.

We want to make the streets where we live, work, shop and play in be safe, attractive and enjoyable spaces. By improving cycling facilities, we will create places that are better connected, that people want to live, work and play in. It will allow the sustainable growth of South Gloucestershire by allowing more people to access jobs sustainably and it will create desirable neighbourhoods and a healthier population.

## Links to Supplementary Planning Documents and Development Control guidance

This Cycling Strategy will affect both existing areas and new developments within South Gloucestershire. The requirements for the new development in the North Fringe are set out in the Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood Development Framework SPD as well as the Core Strategy and [emerging] Policies, Sites and Places Plan. Sustainability is a key part of these plans. This Cycling Strategy will inform developers of the standards required for infrastructure and linkages to existing urban areas.

### School cycle parking

Providing sufficient high quality cycle parking facilities is a crucial factor in encouraging more people to cycle more often. Since 2012/13, through a combination of the LSTF project and the Cycle Ambition Fund, South Gloucestershire has provided 636 new Cycle parking spaces and 794 new scooter parking spaces for Primary and Secondary Schools across the authority.

**New cycle parking at Abbeywood School:**





## 4. Ongoing engagement and consultation

The public will be engaged and consulted in order to build up a clear understanding of the current barriers to cycling, allowing the Council to work towards their removal. Community groups and local stakeholders were invited to take part in workshops as part of the development of this Strategy and we intend to continue this level of engagement.

The Council is committed to providing ongoing engagement and consultation with stakeholders in the business sector as well as cycle interest groups and local communities. We will continue to engage with the Cycle Forum in order to build an understanding of the needs of cyclists and any issues that may arise. All future engagement will meet the standards set out in the Community Engagement Strategy for South Gloucestershire.

### Cycle route gritting

We have invested in new cycle route gritting machinery to help us salt treat key cycle commuter routes and shared use paths to prevent ice from developing in cold weather. This has enabled the Council to increase its route coverage by over 100 per cent, with a total of 14396m now being gritted, compared to 5944m in 2014/15. Meaning that the majority of the A4174 ring road path from Abbeywood Roundabout to its connection with the Bristol and Bath Railway Path in Mangotsfield is now being treated regularly, along with the section of the railway path from the South Gloucestershire/Bristol boundary through to Warmley, enabling more cyclists to continue to ride safely through the winter months.

#### **Tractor mounted grit spreader for cycleways:**





## 5. Physical, operational, behavioural measures

As part of our stakeholder workshops, physical, operational and behavioural measures for cycling were considered according to how well they would fit in South Gloucestershire, the aim being to identify the most effective measures to improve the current local cycle network, and to be implemented in new developments like Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood or new Enterprise Areas.

- Physical measures are cycling infrastructure such as cycle paths and cycle parking.
- Operational measures relate to how the Council and other partners can put policies into practice (e.g. – maintenance processes)
- Behavioural measures are those that help people to start, maintain or increase the amount of cycling that they do

Measures were considered based on how well they have worked before in other parts of the country, their affordability, and their benefit to cost ratio. A table summarizing some of the measures that could be implemented in South Gloucestershire is included below:

	<b>Cycling Measures</b>
<b>Physical</b>	Develop and maintain an inclusive and attractive network of cycle routes
	Install intuitive signage and way-finding for easy navigation around the cycle network.
	Identify and provide continuous high quality routes from key journey origins to important destinations and trip attractors
	Cycle route priority over side roads and driveways
	Reallocation of road space and construction of dedicated, segregated cycle route provision.
	Cycle Contraflows and routes through cul-de-sac's
	Locate high quality cycle facilities at the beginning and end of journeys including secure cycle parking and bike hire at transport interchanges.
	Enhance the quality of the public realm and street environments.

<b>Operational</b>	Maintenance and improvement of existing and propose cycle provision to ensure the safety of users in accordance with maintenance standards.
	Accommodate cyclist's needs and requirements.
	Highlight 'best practise' technical guidance and advice to developers and planners for designing cycle-friendly infrastructure.
	Ensure cycle strategy is integrated within other relevant local authority policy frameworks and visions.
	Seek financial streams for developing active travel network through large scale funding bids for major transport projects.
<b>Behavioural</b>	Provide widely accessible Bikeability Training.
	Promote the Health benefits of Cycling, expand health programmes and cycling initiatives through the Physical Activity Strategy and Tackling Obesity agenda.
	Work with key stakeholders in the voluntary, public and private sectors to increase the exposure of cycling amongst the local population.
	Introduction of 20mph zones near to schools.
	Encourage innovation in the approach to overcoming barriers to cycling such as electric bicycles and on-street bicycle maintenance tools.
	Cycle awareness training for professional drivers, focus on HGV

### M32 junction 1 signal controlled crossing

Improving pinch points on our existing cycle network is an important factor in encouraging more people to cycle more often. A new signal controlled crossing was installed across the M32 slip road in 2015, to provide a safer crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists using the busy Ring Road Cycle Path, which is part of the Cycle Trunk Route. Prior to the installation of this crossing, funded by the Cycling City Ambition fund, users were forced use an informal crossing point during a gap in traffic, and the completed scheme has improved safety, whilst providing adequate crossing times.

#### M32 slip road crossing, before and after:





## 6. The hierarchy of cycle routes

As with all elements of the transport network, different sections of the cycle route network serve different functions, and carry different expectations in terms of the level of service provided to the user. In the same way that users of the motorway network or the main line railway expect a faster uninterrupted journey than those using a country lane or a branch line, there are sections of the cycle network where user expectation is for a quicker, reliable journey and those where a more leisurely trip is desired.

With this in mind, we have categorised all cycle routes into four types so that cyclists know what level of service to expect. Categories are based on current level and type of use, and the linkages to key employment sites, education facilities, services and transport interchanges. Local business networks and cycling interest groups attended workshops which helped to define the hierarchy of cycle routes as follows:

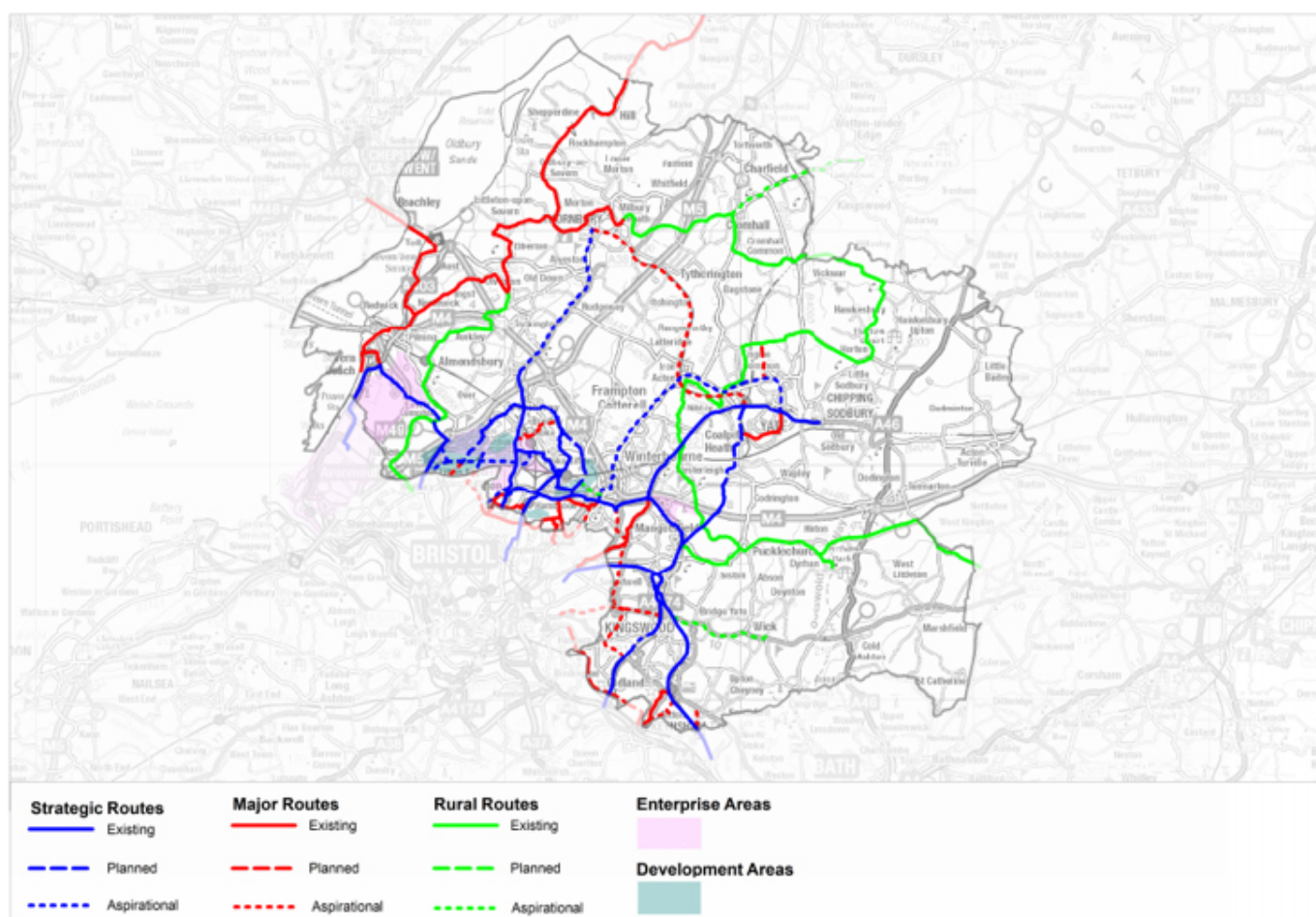
	<b>1. Strategic</b>	<b>2. Major</b>	<b>3. Local</b>	<b>4. Rural</b>
				
<b>Route type</b>	Core Routes linking main settlements and areas of high employment/education	Core leisure routes and routes linking the strategic network to secondary destinations	Feeder routes within urban areas	Rural feeder routes
<b>Common Characteristics</b>	Largely segregated network of cycle routes with separation from pedestrians where width allows.	Predominantly off road routes, although some linking sections might be on road.	Mix of on road routes often with cycle lanes/symbols and off road shared use links.	Predominantly quiet on road routes without cycle lanes, with some off road paths.
<b>Surface</b>	Sealed Surface	Sealed Surface	Generally surfaced routes	Generally surfaced, but some routes may be unsurfaced
<b>Lighting</b>	Lit within urban areas	Lit within urban areas	On road routes usually lit	Not generally lit
<b>Example routes</b>	Bristol and Bath Railway Path, Concorde Way	A432 Downend, Filton Road Frenchay-UWE	Brook Way Bradley Stoke, Mangotsfield Rd Staple Hill	Avon Cycleway Thornbury-Yate, NCN 41 Severn Beach-Gloucestershire

The cycle route hierarchy will help the council with issues such as the allocation of resources for maintenance and improvement schemes, standards for cycle infrastructure, and the setting of design principles for each category of route. Strategic and Major routes will usually have priority when considering the allocation of future funding, however improvements to Local and Rural routes will also be considered, particularly where match funding becomes available or an urgent issue is identified. This is necessary in order to provide a realistic and affordable level of service and

maintenance, and to enable the prioritisation of key routes both now and in the future. The hierarchy has been established using cycle counts, local knowledge and taking into consideration areas of importance and future growth. The current condition of existing cycle routes are being assessed and will help inform the future maintenance programme.

It is important to note that the standards to which we aspire are not always achievable due to constraints on the existing road and cycle network. The suitability of infrastructure will be decided on a case by case basis. The council's maintenance regime is currently being reviewed as part of the Asset Management Plan review and will be reassessed to fit with priorities and standards within the newly proposed cycle route hierarchy.

The following map shows how the South Gloucestershire Cycle Network shown in section 3 looks geographically, highlighting how Strategic Cycle Routes are providing links between Enterprise and development areas. The map shows all currently identified Strategic and Major cycle routes, as well as key Rural routes which form sections of the National Cycle Network, and is intended to be a living document to be added to and amended over time, as new routes are identified and desire lines change.





## 7. Implementation

Key actions that will help us meet our Targets and deliver our Aims

Action	
New Infrastructure:	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bromley Heath walking and cycling bridge, part of the Cycle Trunk Route, funded by Cycle Ambition Fund</li> </ul>	By 2017-18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of work to complete the Yate Spur cycle route, currently funded by the Local Growth Fund</li> </ul>	2016-17 and beyond
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hayes Way shared use Cycle path, funded by Cycle Ambition Fund</li> </ul>	By 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church Road Shared use Cycle path, part of the Cycle Trunk Route, funded by Cycle Ambition Fund</li> </ul>	By 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycle Trunk Route: Continue to prioritise the completion of the Cribbs/Patchway to Emersons Green East Cycle Trunk Route, ensuring the route is delivered through new developments and seeking funding for pinch point improvements on existing sections</li> </ul>	On-going
Procedural	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think cycle: Impact on cyclists to be considered as part of the development all Transport Capital Programme schemes</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20mph: SGC policy to rollout appropriate 20mph provision on routes to all schools by 2019/20, making cycling to school safer</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycle Forum: Regular engagement with local cyclists through quarterly Cycle Forum meetings and email updates</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership working: Engaging with Neighbouring Authorities, Developers, Local Business, Highways England and others to deliver an improved cycle network</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Guidance: SGC recommends the use of the Sustrans Handbook for Cycle Friendly Design and Cycle Friendly Design Manual when designing new or improved cycle routes</li> </ul>	

Successful delivery of this Strategy is subject to the continued availability of sufficient funding.

Internal funding sources, such as the Council's Local Transport Capital Programme and the Maintenance budget are approved annually and provide some core funding, and the Council works with developers as part of the planning process to secure Section 106 funding for Sustainable Travel improvements. However the majority of funding for cycle infrastructure schemes, including the Local Growth Fund, and Department for Transport grants such as the Cycle Ambition Fund, come from the submission of funding bids to external sources and as such cannot be guaranteed.

### Cycle route lighting schemes

Providing new street lighting to illuminate unlit sections of existing cycle routes can significantly improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly during winter months, by encouraging greater use of the path during hours of darkness.

Using funding from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and Cycle Ambition Fund, we provided new street lighting on 3.3km of key cycle routes during 2015/16, including sections of the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, and Ring Road Cycle Path. Using energy efficient lighting and part-night operation (switched off between 1am and 5am) has helped to minimise the environmental impact of the new lights.

#### **Bristol and Bath railway path near Staple Hill:**



## 8. Annexes

Accompanying this Cycling Strategy document are number of Cycle route maps intended clarify the current and future cycle route network, these maps currently show only Strategic Routes, Major routes and Rural routes which form part of the National Cycle Network, but Urban routes and other rural routes will be added to complete the network:

Grouping	Material	Reference Number	Purpose / Role
<b>Hierarchy and Strategic Mapping</b>	<a href="#">SG Area Network Map</a>	01	Highlighting key route sections that require upgrading and servicing to meet and exceed minimum design standards.
	<a href="#">Cycle Network: Tube Map</a>	02	Highlighting network connectivity and links between places along key strategic and major cycling routes.
	<a href="#">Key Route Stick Map</a>	03 a	Highlighting the alignment and direction of key arterial cycling routes proposed through South Gloucestershire
	<a href="#">Key Route Stick Map</a>	03 b	Highlighting the alignment and direction of key arterial cycling routes proposed through South Gloucestershire
	<a href="#">Key Route Stick Map</a>	03 c	Highlighting the alignment and direction of key arterial cycling routes proposed through South Gloucestershire
	<a href="#">Cycle Flow Map</a>	04	Map showing cycle count data between 2008-2015 at key locations.
<b>Town Specific Mapping</b>	<a href="#">Inset map for Chipping Sodbury / Yate</a>	05	Interpreting the type and the extent of provision in the locality on a small scale.
	<a href="#">Inset Map for Thornbury</a>	06	Interpreting the type and extent of provision in the locality on a small scale.
	<a href="#">Inset Map for North Fringe</a>	07	Interpreting the type and extent of provision in the locality on a small scale.
	<a href="#">Inset Map for Eastern Fringe</a>	08	Interpreting the type and extent of provision in the locality on a small scale.